

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1 1. A system for tracking descriptive information
2 about a changeable article:
3 a machine-readable label (MRL) attachable to
4 articles;
5 one or more processors connectable to a MRL
6 reader and programmed to create an association between data
7 stored in an MRL with particular data describing a given
8 article and store said association in a data store;
9 said particular data including a changeable
10 characteristic of said given article;
11 said one or more processors being programmed to
12 scan said MRL and permit a user to complete a transaction
13 involving said given article including reading said
14 particular data in said data store, said transaction being
15 responsive to said particular data.

1 2. A system as in claim 1, wherein said one or
2 more processors are programmed to accept update data
3 indicating a change in said given article and to update
4 said data describing said given article such that when said
5 one or more processors scan said MRL and permit said user
6 to complete a further transaction involving said given

7 article, said transaction is responsive to change in said
8 given article.

1 3. A system as in claim 2, wherein said change is
2 a change of quantity of a material of said article.

1 4. A system as in claim 1, wherein said data
2 describing said given article includes a quantity of a
3 material of said article.

1 5. A system as in claim 1, wherein said one or
2 more processors are connectable to be controlled at a
3 terminal such that a maker of said article can at least
4 partially create said data describing said given article by
5 inputting data into said terminal.

1 6. A system as in claim 1, further comprising a
2 scale including a MRL reader, wherein said one or more
3 processors are programmed to accept update data from said
4 scale, said update data including a change in weight of
5 said given article.

1 7. A system as in claim 1, further comprising a
2 device for measuring a change in said given article, said
3 device including a MRL reader, wherein said one or more
4 processors are programmed to accept update data from said
5 device, said update data including a change in said given
6 article measured by said device.

1 8. A method for tracking descriptive information
2 about a changeable article, comprising the steps of:
3 attaching a machine-readable label (MRL) to an
4 article;
5 said MRL having a unique code;
6 at a retail establishment, storing a correlation
7 between descriptive information about said article and said
8 unique code in a data store; and
9 reading said unique code at a location other than
10 said retail establishment to obtain at least a portion of
11 said descriptive information using said correlation in said
12 data store.

1 9. A method as in claim 8, wherein said
2 descriptive information includes an initial quantity or
3 size of said article.

1 10. A method as in claim 8, further comprising
2 the step of reading said unique code and looking up said
3 correlation responsively to said unique code at a location
4 other than said retail establishment and modifying at least
5 a portion of said descriptive information responsively to
6 said correlation in said data store.

1 11. A method as in claim 10, wherein said
2 descriptive information includes an initial quantity or
3 size of said article.

1 12. A method as in claim 8, wherein said
2 correlation in said data store is automatically deleted
3 responsively to one or more predetermined events.

1 13. A method as in claim 12, wherein said one or
2 more predetermined events includes the passage of a
3 predetermined period of time after said step of storing a
4 correlation.

1 14. A method for tracking descriptive
2 information about a changeable article, comprising the
3 steps of:

4 attaching a machine-readable label (MRL) to an
5 article;

6 said MRL having a unique code;

7 storing a correlation between descriptive
8 information about said article and said unique code in a
9 data store; and

10 reading said unique code to obtain at least a
11 portion of said descriptive information using said
12 correlation in said data store;

13 deleting said correlation after the passage of a
14 predetermined period of time after said step of storing.

1 15. A method as in claim 14, wherein said
2 descriptive information includes an initial quantity or
3 size of said article.

1 17. A method as in claim 16, wherein said
2 descriptive information includes an initial quantity or
3 size of said article.